

**Compliments and Complaints - Policy and Procedure**

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Community Links welcomes feedback about its services from current clients, prospective clients, clients who have moved on in the past 6 months, their families, friends or carers, organisations and individuals who come into contact with us, our services, or work in partnership with us.

1.2 We are committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we work with. In order to do this, we need you to give us any feedback about our service, and to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help you resolve any complaints as quickly as possible. That is why we have a complaints procedure. Sometimes we can put things right; sometimes we can only explain ourselves and apologise. But we do want to learn from our mistakes. What you tell us helps to improve our service to you.

1.3 We understand that many people do not see the point in complaining fearing that they will not be listened to or suffer a detriment so we expect all our employees to respond positively to concerns or complaints, taking time to listen to the issue and not to respond defensively. We hope that this helps create an environment where it feels safe and acceptable to raise a complaint or concern.

1.4 Any expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response is treated as a complaint. We listen, treat them seriously, and learn from them so we can continuously improve our service.

1.5 This procedure is not intended for use by employees who should use our grievance or whistleblowing procedures.

1.6 Current and prospective users of our services are advised of the process and are given a leaflet containing the procedure and relevant contact details **(appendix 2).**

1.7 You can access our complaints policy or find out how to make a complaint by visiting our website <https://www.commlinks.co.uk/contact/have-your-say/>

1.8 Please contact us if you need document in an alternative format e.g. large print, other languages.

1.9 Compliments and Complaints can be made face to face, by telephone or text (for deaf and hard of hearing clients), via the website to the relevant person or in writing. A form is available **(appendix 3).**

1. **Compliments and Suggestions for Improvement**

2.1 It is great to receive compliments, even better if they are in writing.

Compliments can be given direct to the worker, volunteer manager or anyone else. We will ensure they get passed on to the relevant employee.

2.2 We welcome any suggestions for improvements to services. We will consider any reasonable idea and will let you know if we have been able to act on your suggestion or not.

**3. Our Standards for Handling Complaints**

3.1 We treat all complaints seriously, whether they are made by letter or by email etc.

3.2 You will be treated with courtesy and fairness at all times. We would hope, you too, will be courteous and fair in your dealings with our employees at all times.

3.3 We will treat your complaint in confidence however, it is likely that in order to fully investigate a complaint your details will need to be shared with relevant employees.

3.4 We ask that outline your complaint as clearly as possible and to specify what outcome you would like as a result of your complaint.

3.5 At any stage you can have support from a friend, carer or agency (e.g. advocate). If you need support to arrange this, your support workers or service manager can provide details of advocacy organisations and help you to make contact with them. Interpreters can also be arranged if required.

3.6 If your complaint alleges harassment or abuse, the response will follow procedures as set out in policy guidance relating to harassment and safeguarding.

**4.0 Overview and Timescales**

4.1 At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much detail as possible, including any documents and correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint in line with our procedure.

* 1. We aim to:
     1. Acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
     2. Offer a time to meet with you within a further 10 working days

4.2.3 Provide a full written response within a further 10 working days.

4.3 If for any reason the complaint will take longer to investigate and respond to, we will keep you fully informed.

4.4 The purpose of the investigation is to make sure all relevant evidence is collected and assessed. The manager will interview witnesses as appropriate and take statements from those involved. They will keep typed records of all meetings and telephone conversations undertaken as part of the investigation together with any other documentation.

4.5 Particular care will be taken to identify any issues that are subject to other statutory or Community Links procedures and policies, such as Child Safeguarding, Adult Safeguarding, Racial Harassment etc., that may come to light during the investigation. CQC registered services must notify CQC of all incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of people who use services.

* 1. Our response aims to offer:

4.6.1 An acknowledgement that the complaint was/is taken seriously;

4.6.2 An outline of the scope of the investigation;

4.6.3 The investigator’s view of what happened and why;

4.6.4 An outline of the decision;

4.6.5 The right of appeal;

4.6.6 Inform you of the complaints handling feedback questionnaire.

4.7 It may also include any of the following as appropriate to the circumstances:

* + 1. An apology;
    2. An undertaking to learn from the complaint and to take steps to make sure such an event is not repeated (for example a review of policy or practice);
    3. Compensation for any small financial loss (for example, for lost or damaged property). The Manager involved can agree an appropriate amount up to £100 with their Operational Manager or appropriate Director;
    4. Any recommendation for compensation above this amount should be referred to the Senior Leadership Team and you will be informed accordingly.

4.8 We will send you a Diversity Monitoring Form to complete if you are not currently a client of our services.

**5.0 Three stage Process (appendix 1).**

**5.1 Stage 1**

A complaint at this stage can be made in person, by telephone or text (for deaf or hard of hearing clients), in writing or via the website to the **Service Manager.**

**5.2 Stage 2**

If you feel the investigation has not considered all the relevant information, or you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer the matter to an Operational Manager or appropriate Director by telephone or text (for deaf and hard of hearing clients), or in writing **within ten days** of receiving the response at Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Service Manager you can go straight to Stage 2.

The Operational Manager or appropriate Director will receive all the evidence and documentation that has been gathered in previous stages and will examine this to make sure that all procedures have been followed correctly. They will also liaise with the original Investigator to ensure they are satisfied that the original complaint was, understood fully, investigated thoroughly and responded to appropriately.

**5.3 Stage 3**

If you feel the investigation has not considered all the relevant information, or if you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, you may refer your complaint to Stage 3. This can be done by telephone or text (for deaf and hard of hearing clients) or in writing to the Chief Executive within ten days of receiving the response from stage 2.

The Chief Executive will consider the way the complaint has been investigated and handled by the organisation and make a decision as to whether the outcome is fair and appropriate.

The Chief Exec will either uphold the complaint and/or direct a different remedy to that decided upon at stage 1 or 2; or confirm the previous decision.

Where applicable, the Chief Executive will make recommendations to review or change the organisation’s policies or procedures.

The Chief Executives decision is final.

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If you remain dissatisfied, you are at liberty to contact service commissioners or registration bodies such as the CQC, but there is no further right of appeal within the organisation. Links to relevant organisational websites can be found on the service page of the service you wish to complain about.

**6.0 Exceptions**

Complaints will always initially be processed at stage 1 except in the following circumstances

* + 1. A complaint about a manager should be made to the relevant Director (Stage 2).
    2. A complaint about the conduct of a Director should be made to the Chief Executive (Stage 3).
    3. A complaint about the conduct of the Chief Executive should be made to the Chair of the Management Committee.

**7.0 Withdrawals**

7.1 A complaint can be withdrawn at any stage. If you wish to withdraw please contact the person investigating your complaint or the Service Manager. A formal notification will be sent just to confirm your complaint has been withdrawn.

7.2 It may be that the issue/s raised within the complaint should still be investigated as a matter of safety/risk. This will be decided on a case by case basis.

**8.0 Non Engagement in the process**

8.1 If the investigating manager has attempted to contact you on numerous occasions, without success, then they may need to take a decision to close the case. A formal notification will be sent to confirm we are closing the complaint file.

8.2 It may be that the issue/s raised within the complaint should still be investigated as a matter of safety/risk. This will be decided on a case by case basis.

**9.0 Monitoring and Review of compliments and complaints**

9.1 Each Service Manager and will keep a log of all compliments and complaints received on the Complaints Record Form on Community Links Case Management System. This is an electronic form that needs completing electronically, by typing directly into the form.

9.2 Diversity Monitoring

9.2.1 Where a complaint is not made by a current client, you will be asked to complete a diversity monitoring form.

9.2.2 Current client’s diversity monitoring data will already be held on our system.

9.2.3 Complaints are monitored by diversity solely for the purpose of ensuring anti-discriminatory practice.

9.3 Complaints are monitored to assess service response and identify ways to improve service quality and practice.

Information gathered regarding complaints will be collated into an annual Compliments and Complaints report by the strategic lead for quality and performance to be presented to the Quality & Performance Sub-Committee in August. The report can be shared with clients and employees and will be made anonymous with identifying details removed.



**Appendix 2:**

**Complaint Process Flowchart**

Complaint received

Close file

No further right of appeal

Complainant unhappy with Stage 3 outcome

Letter detailing investigation outcome

Acknowledgement letter

Complaint withdrawn / non-engagement

Contact Complaint - Agree time to meet to discuss points raised

Meeting to discuss issues raised

Investigation

Complainant satisfied with outcome

Outcome letter detailing investigation findings to be sent

Complainant unhappy with Stage 2 outcome

Complainant unhappy with Stage 1 outcome

**If you would like to make a**

**Compliment or Complaint**

**You can**

* **Send us a letter;**
* **Tell your support worker what you want to say;**
* **Contact us over the phone on 0113 2739660 or by text on 07703 162364;**
* **By email to** [**info@commlinks.co.uk**](mailto:info@commlinks.co.uk)**;**
* **Online at www.commlinks.co.uk;**
* **Use the slip provided with this leaflet.**

**The slip can be:**

* **returned to your support worker**
* **posted in the boxes provided at our hostels and office sites posted back to us LS7 3PD**Freepost RTCA-TUXU-YRYR **at the address shown**

**A full copy of our complaints procedure is available from any Community Links employee or from our website.**

**Links to webpages of external organisations you can contact if you are unhappy with our response can be found on the service page on our website**

**If you would like copies of this leaflet or would like it in a different format, please contact us at:**

Community Links

3 Limewood Way

Leeds

LS14 1AB

Tel: 0113 273 9660



[**www.commlinks.co.uk**](http://www.commlinks.co.uk)

Follow us on Twitter @commlinksnorth



Find us on Facebook



[www.facebook.com/CommunityLinks](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityLinks)



**Compliments and Complaints**

**and how to make them**

* **We believe that being open to feedback will help us to improve our services.**
* **Please tell us when things go well and we will pass on your compliments to the relevant Community Links employee.**
* **Please tell us if you think we can improve the services we provide in any way.**
* **We will always try to respond in a positive and practical way that helps resolve the situation.**
* **If you have a complaint you can expect to be listened to carefully, taken seriously and treated with courtesy and respect by everyone in Community Links.**

**Complaints Procedure**

**Please note that any stage of the process you can be accompanied by a friend, carer or advocate. We can help you get in touch with someone to help and can provide interpreting facilities if required.**

**Stage 1**

* If you wish to make a complaint you can contact the Service Manager
* S/he will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
* S/he will offer a time to meet with you to discuss your complaint, within 10 working days
* S/he will also talk to those concerned and gather as much information as possible.
* S/he will reply to you in writing within 10 working days of meeting or inform you if there is a delay.
* If you are unhappy with the result you can proceed to Stage 2.

**Stage 2**

* Write to/contact an Operational Manager or appropriate Director at Head Office who will acknowledge your complaint and offer to meet you to discuss why you are dissatisfied within the same timescales as stage 1.

*Community Links is part of the Inspire North Group*



* S/he will check that we have listened to you, understood your complaint and responded appropriately.
* S/he will reply to you in writing within 10 working days of meeting or inform you if there is a delay.
* If you are unhappy with the outcome you can proceed to stage 3.

**Stage 3**

* You need to write to/contact the Chief Executive or appropriate Director at Head Office who will acknowledge your complaint and offer to meet you to discuss why you are dissatisfied within the same timescales as stage 1.

*You can give us feedback as to how we handled your complaint by visiting our website*

[**www.commlinks.co.uk**](http://www.commlinks.co.uk)

Follow us on Twitter @commlinksnorth



Find us on Facebook



[www.facebook.com/CommunityLinks](http://www.facebook.com/CommunityLinks)

* The Chief Exec will either uphold the complaint and/or direct a different remedy to that decided upon at stage 1or 2; or confirm the previous decision.
* The Chief executive’s decision is final and you will be notified of their decision within 10 working days.

A record of all complaints will be kept for monitoring purposes.



You can use this form if you wish to make a complaint or compliment. You can hand it in at any Community Links office/service, or simply fold on the lines shown on the reverse of this page, staple or tape it together and post it to us. You do not need to affix a stamp.

I want to make a:

Compliment Complaint

|  |
| --- |
| Name: Title: (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms) |

|  |
| --- |
| Address: |

|  |
| --- |
| Phone Number(s): |

Please use the space below to tell us about your compliment or complaint. If you are making a complaint, please include as much information as possible about the issue and how you would like us to put things right.

If you are making the complaint for someone else, please remember to give us their name and address too:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Freepost RTCA-TUXU-YRYR

Community Links

3 Limewood Way

LEEDS

LS14 1AB

Fold here

Fold here